

Rockland, MA

Town Administrator



Community & Position Profile



COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

The Community

The Town of Rockland, located in Plymouth County, is a close-knit and vibrant community with a population of approximately 17,500 residents. It enjoys a strong tradition of open government with a high level of service and respect for its proud history.

[Rockland](#) was settled by European settlers, as a northeastern region of neighboring Abington in 1673. The Town separated and incorporated as Rockland on March 9, 1874. The Town is named for its rocky nature, which was better suited for mills and industry than for farming. Historically, Rockland is best known for its industrial history and was home to many shoe manufacturers. It is believed that Rockland shod approximately half the shoes for the Union Army during the Civil War. Today, Rockland is primarily a suburb of Boston, and the former shoe and boot mills have been repurposed into venues for housing and local artists.



The Town contains 10.1 square miles of area, of which 10.0 square miles is land and 0.1 square miles is water. Rockland is bordered by Weymouth to the northwest, Hingham and Norwell to the northeast, Hanover to the east, Hanson to the south, Whitman to the southwest, and Abington to the west. Rockland is approximately eight miles northeast of Brockton and about 20 miles south of Boston. There are 61.5 road miles in Rockland. There are two MBTA commuter rail stations located in nearby South Weymouth and Abington. Rockland was designated a Green Community in 2012.

Rockland has businesses of various sizes in Town, including North River Collaborative, Partners HealthCare at Home, South Shore Hospital, EMD Serono, and UPPAbaby. As with most primarily residential communities, the majority of residents in the workforce commute outside of Rockland for employment.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Town of Rockland's racial makeup is approximately 93.2% white, 3.4% Black or African American, 2.1% two or more races, 2.0% Hispanic or Latino, and 0.5% Asian.

The median age in Rockland is 40.6 years, which is only slightly older than the state's 39.1 years. In the 65 years and older cohort, Rockland has 16.1% of its population which is virtually equivalent to the state's 16.2%, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The under-18 years cohort in Rockland is also virtually the same as the state with Rockland having 19.7% of the population in that age group compared to the state's 20%.

The median annual household income in Rockland is \$77,573, slightly higher than the state median of \$74,167. While Rockland is considered a middle-income community, approximately 6.3% of the population live in poverty, according to 2017 U.S. Census Bureau estimates. More than 50% of its public school students qualify for the free or reduced lunch program.



The Government

Rockland's government is comprised of a five-member [Board of Selectmen](#) that serves as the Chief Elected and Executive Officers of the Town. Selectmen are elected to staggered three-year terms and are vested with all the municipal authority not specifically retained by the Town's legislative body, Town Meeting, or other elected boards.

The Rockland [Board of Selectmen](#) appoints the position of Town Administrator as the Chief Administrative and Procurement Officer of the Town. The Town Administrator is responsible for executing the policy directives of the Board of Selectmen and for administering the operations and activities of the Town.



The Town Administrator acts on behalf of the Board of Selectmen to administer the Board's role in day-to-day operations.

The powers and duties of the [Town Administrator](#) include: financial management, development and administration of the annual operating budget, strategic plans and objectives, multi-year revenue forecasts on revenues and expenditures, coordination of insurance, grants coordination, inventory of town assets, day-to-day operations of Town departments, collective bargaining, assist in recruitment and selection of department heads, personnel management, public relations, use and maintenance of Town facilities, communications with staff and citizens, grant writing, and attendance at all meetings of the Board of Selectmen and Town Meetings.

The Town Administrator sets the strategy of the Town in accordance with Board of Selectmen directives, sets overall operating goals for the Town, and oversees the efficient and effective administration of Town government to achieve those goals. The Town Administrator is responsible for ensuring the continued economic, social, and financial viability of the Town, and also for ensuring the delivery of quality services to the residents and taxpayers of Rockland.

Rockland has an Open Town Meeting form of government that serves as the legislative body of the Town. According to the Town's [Charter](#), Annual Town Meeting is held no later than June 30th on a date determined by the Board of Selectmen. A quorum of 150 registered voters is the minimum required for the transaction of business. The Annual Town Election is held on the second Saturday in April.

Rockland is proud of the public education it provides students. [Rockland Public Schools](#) consists of one preschool, three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school as well as Rockland Public Daycare and Rockland Regional Adult Learning Center. Overseeing the public school system is an elected five-member [School Committee](#). The school system's vision statement is: The Rockland Public Schools empowers students to excel, to lead and to become dynamic, responsible and successful members of our global society.

Other elected positions include: Board of Health, Board of Assessors, Town Moderator, Planning Board, Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Town Collector, Board of Library Trustees, Board of Park Commissioners, Board of Sewer Commissioners, Board of Water Commissioners, Highway Superintendent, and Housing Authority. The Town also utilizes a number of volunteer boards and commissions, with various modes of appointment, to conduct municipal operations. Rockland's [2017 Annual Town Report](#) can be accessed via its website.

The Town recently posted on its website a few [highlights](#) of the successes it enjoyed in 2018, such as grant awards, moving to regional dispatch, a bond rating increase, and upgrades to facilities. Rockland also recently completed a significant renovation of its high school and built a new senior center.



Finances

Rockland's FY19 budget is approximately \$68.3 million, with about \$26.7 million dedicated to public education. The Town's general stabilization fund has a balance of \$1.7 million. Rockland's OPEB Trust fund balance is approximately \$586,000 and its total OPEB liability, per the FY2017 audit, is approximately \$92.4 million. Its net pension liability is \$34.2 million, per the FY2017 audit. Basic financial statements and an independent [auditor's report](#) for FY17 can be reviewed on the Town's website. According to the auditor's report, property taxes represent nearly 43.2% of the Town's revenue, while approximately 30.9% is from operating grants and revenues (including nearly \$16 million in state aid) and nearly 17.8% from charges for services (such as water, sewer, trash, and ambulance.)



Rockland has a bond rating of AA with a stable outlook, according to a May 2018 ratings action by Standard & Poor's. The rating agency cited Rockland's "improved market value and budgetary performance."

The Town is seeking an Administrator who will actively search out new and creative sources of revenue and grants and/or the sharing of resources to deliver expected services without overburdening taxpayers.

Rockland is primarily a residential community, but it has a sizeable commercial sector. Approximately 80% of the Town's assessed value is attributable to residential uses, while about 20% is associated with commercial, industrial, and personal property. The FY19 tax rate was set at a single rate of \$17.92 per \$1,000 valuation. In FY19, the Town's total valuation is about \$2.1 billion.

Challenges and Opportunities

- **Economic Development.** The majority of Rockland's tax base is residential. Accordingly, additional revenues needed to fund expenditures can make the Town less affordable for residents unless creative revenue opportunities are explored. Rockland is interested in attracting thoughtful commercial development that will fit with the Town's character. The Town is working on a revitalization plan for its downtown that would include mixed-use projects. [Union Point](#), the former site of a Naval Air Base which is partially in Rockland, Abington, and Weymouth, is expected to have up to two million square feet of commercial development within Rockland's borders. There are currently three medical or recreational marijuana establishments that seeking to locate in Town and, in the past few years, three new car dealerships and the corporate headquarters of UPPAbaby have opened in Rockland.
- **Housing.** As of October 2016, 6.3% of Rockland's housing units met the state's affordability requirements. Two 40B developments, with a possible total of 83 units including 44 units of senior housing and 39 units of rental housing, are currently being proposed. Homes in Rockland have a median value of \$288,100, according to U.S. Census data. Like many Massachusetts' communities, the Town's population is aging, so there is concern regarding a need for additional housing that is appropriate for older residents as well as for young families. Rockland completed its [Housing Production Plan](#) in October 2016.
- **Education.** Education is a high priority in Rockland. The Town has approximately 2,400 public school students. Rockland Public Schools comprises one preschool, three elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, a public daycare, and an adult learning center. The school system's FY19 budget is approximately \$25 million. The District's [strategic plan](#) for 2017-2022 can be located on its website. Students who reside in Rockland also have the opportunity to attend the [South Shore Vocational Technical High School](#) in Hanover and [South Shore Charter Public School](#) in Norwell. Currently, about 100 students from Rockland are enrolled in the vocational technical high school. Approximately 96% of Rockland residents age 25+ have a high school diploma and about 29% have a bachelor's degree or higher, according to U.S. Census statistics.



- **Capital Needs.** Rockland strives to address its infrastructure issues in a timely manner; however, like most communities, the Town has some infrastructure needs. Rockland is currently in the final phase of a significant roads project and recently constructed a new middle school. Future capital improvement projects may include: a new fire station, upgrades to the water treatment facility, expansion of the wastewater treatment plant, a new or renovated elementary school building, and a community center.
- **Master Plan.** Rockland's Master Plan is in need of updating and that process is underway with the assistance of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. To date, the housing assessment and open space plan portions have been completed.
- **Police Department.** The [Police Department](#) has an annual budget of approximately \$4.1 million, including salaries and operations. There are 34 full-time officers, plus seven part-time officers and 22 auxiliary officers. The Police Station is located on Market Street. Dispatch is handled via the Holbrook Regional Emergency Communications Center. The Animal Control Division is also under the Police Department's jurisdiction.
- **Fire Department/EMS.** The [Fire Department](#) currently has 29 full-time positions and two open positions. Its annual budget is about \$3.4 million. The Fire Department operates out of one station, located on Union Street, which was built in 1939 with an addition in 1978. The department also operates EMS services with two ambulances. Approximately 85-90% of firefighters are also paramedics. Fire/EMS responded to approximately 3,400 calls in 2018.
- **Recreation.** Recreational opportunities are plentiful in Rockland. The [Rockland Youth Commission](#) provides numerous recreational and instructional programs such as basketball, mini-sports, lacrosse, arts and crafts, dance, drama, floor hockey, tumbling, archery, home alone safety classes, and babysitter training. A recreational rail trail, which was completed in December, allows for scenic walking and running.
- **Communications.** Strong communication skills, both verbal and written, are necessary in order for the Town Administrator to effectively engage and manage relationships with various internal and external constituencies. He or she should embrace technology and modern communication tools to inform and educate staff, local officials, and citizens. He or she must be open and transparent with elected and appointed officials, employees, and residents.
- **Work Climate.** The next Town Administrator must be highly ethical and strive to foster and maintain a positive working climate in which the Town's policies and procedures are administered in an equitable manner. The office/work atmosphere must be encouraging and supportive of all staff members and volunteers. The next Town Administrator must demonstrate leadership skills, be a morale booster, and team builder.



The Ideal Candidate

The Board of Selectmen seeks a strategic and proactive Town Administrator with municipal managerial experience who can work collaboratively with the Board. The successful candidate should be able to demonstrate prior success as a manager, an assistant manager, or head of a significant department in a complex municipal organization. The candidate should be competent in all areas of municipal management and operations, but especially in finance and budgeting, strategic planning, human resources, procurement, grant writing, strategic planning, and community and economic development.

The Town Administrator must be an ethical and decisive administrator and leader who can work collaboratively with the various interests of the Town. He or she is expected to work cooperatively with all constituencies within the Town, including all elected and appointed officials, the school department, and volunteers. He or she should have or be able to develop good working relationships with regional and state officials. The Town Administrator should be Procurement certified by the state or able to attain certification within the first six months of employment in Rockland.

The Town Administrator should be able to build morale and trust within municipal government and throughout the Town as well as be an energetic ambassador for the community. The Administrator should enjoy working in a team-oriented organization and should foster a team approach to problem solving. He or she should be adept at working with different personality types, exhibit patience, and keep an open-door policy. He or she should focus on the positive, be respectful, and embrace becoming actively engaged with this close-knit community. He or she should build a culture of mutual respect, trust, and cooperation.

The Town Administrator must be able to work collaboratively, delegate effectively, and provide guidance, support and motivation to all municipal employees. The Town Administrator must possess good listening skills and be open to input from all constituencies. He or she should have strong grant-writing skills and the ability to accurately and effectively explain complex issues to individuals, committees, and the citizenry. The next Town Administrator needs to empower employees to solve problems and enhance services. He or she should encourage mentoring and work to strengthen interdepartmental relationships. Strong written and verbal communication skills are important for this position.



The Town Administrator must also possess and demonstrate successful experience in personnel management and adhere to a firm but fair management style. He or she must be able to develop and sustain strong and credible relations with employees, volunteers, and residents. The Town Administrator must be a creative problem-solver who is approachable, accessible, transparent, trustworthy, and a consensus-builder. He or she must lead by example, and be strategic, motivated, innovative, organized, and goal-oriented.

Candidates should possess a bachelor's degree in public or business administration or a related field; a master's degree in public administration is preferred. In the absence of either degree, a minimum of 10 years actual work experience shall be required and consist of at least five years of progressively responsible experience in municipal management, three years of which shall be as a chief administrative or assistant administrator in a municipal organization. Preferred candidates will have experience as a Town/City Manager/Administrator or Assistant Town/City Manager/Administrator. The successful candidate should possess demonstrated skills, abilities and knowledge in municipal finance, personnel management, strategic planning, grant writing, municipal procurement, economic development, and community planning. The successful candidate should know and seek to implement municipal management best practices.



Compensation

The Town of Rockland will offer an employment agreement and compensation package that is competitive with comparable Massachusetts' communities, with an annual salary of up to \$150,000+/-, depending on qualifications and experience. An attractive benefits package, including health and retirement plans, is part of the Town Administrator's total compensation. Residency is not required.

How To Apply

Interested applicants should provide résumés and cover letters, in confidence, by 5:00 p.m. on March 4, 2019, to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

Subject: Rockland Town Administrator

Submission via a single PDF is preferred

Following the closing date, résumés will be reviewed according to the outlined qualifications. The Rockland Town Administrator Screening Committee will interview the most qualified candidates in confidence. Based upon these interviews, finalists will be chosen for further evaluation and reference checks, and will then be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen. Finalists will be contacted for references and approval of background reviews before their selection is publicly advanced to the Board of Selectmen. The Rockland Board of Selectmen will interview finalists and select the Town Administrator.

Questions regarding the position should be directed to Bernard Lynch, Principal, Community Paradigm Associates, at: blynch@communityparadigm.com or 978-621-6733.

The Town of Rockland is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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